

MAR 19 1998

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412 Sixty-first Street
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Bartlett & Co.

March 15, 1998

Lester Snow
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

I am writing to make two points:

- 1) Bulletin 160 and the CALFED program are currently unacceptable because they do not give due consideration to environmental issues in general and because they fail to consider feasible water conservation options.
- 2) I support non-structural solutions to problems in the Delta, and I oppose the construction of more dams.

Although I could cite many examples of insensitivity to environmental issues, one stands out as particularly egregious: we are currently irrigating lands that are poisoning our rivers. On the West side of the San Joaquin Valley there are marginal quality farmlands that should never have been brought into production. When these lands are irrigated, the excess water picks up salt, pesticides, and other poisons (especially selenium, an element that is toxic in anything higher than trace amounts), which is then dumped back into our rivers. I believe that these marginal lands should be taken out of production -- "retired" -- and that water should be transferred to the environment. We should not use scarce water to irrigate marginal quality farmland, and poisoning rivers in the process.

CALFED has done an analysis that shows that retiring 500,000 acres of these lands could generate almost 1.5 million acre-feet of water at an average cost of \$150 per acre-foot (much cheaper than the other alternatives under consideration). Yet despite this analysis, CALFED is not proposing to include this approach in any of their alternatives.

Environmental issues have been insufficiently documented, and the environmental costs have been grossly underestimated in the CALFED literature. The Bay Delta has already suffered severe environmental damage and compromise, and the actual costs of recovering the health of the Bay Delta have not yet been determined. How, then, can we assess the actual costs of more structural changes and their environmental impact, since the cost of the impact must include unspecified mitigation?

Thank you for your consideration. I would appreciate a response to this letter.

Sincerely,

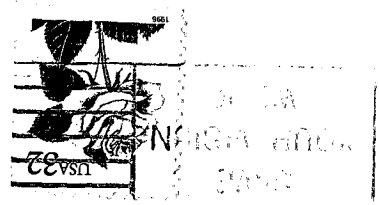


EIS Comment

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